Animal Brides

folktales of Aarne-Thompson-Uther type 402 and related stories

translated and/or edited by

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Chonguita the Monkey Wife

Philippines

There was a king who had three sons, named Pedro, Diego, and Juan. One day the king ordered these three gentlemen to set out from the kingdom and seek their fortunes. The three brothers took different directions, but before they separated they agreed to meet in a certain place in the forest.

After walking for many days, Don Juan met an old man on the road. This old man gave Don Juan bread, and told him to go to a palace which was a mile away. "But as you enter the gate," said the old man, "you must divide the bread which I have given you among the monkeys which are guarding the gate to the palace; otherwise you will not be able to enter."

Don Juan took the bread; and when he reached the palace, he did as the old man had advised him. After entering the gate, he saw a big monkey. Frightened at the sight of the animal, Don Juan was about to run away, when the animal called to him, and said, "Don Juan, I know that your purpose in coming here was to find your fortune; and at this very moment my daughter Chonguita will marry you."

The archbishop of the monkeys was called, and Don Juan and Chonguita were married without delay.

A few days afterwards Don Juan asked permission from his wife to go to the place where he and his brothers had agreed to meet. When Chonguita's mother heard that Don Juan was going away, she said to him, "If you are going away, take Chonguita with you."

Although Don Juan was ashamed to go with Chonguita because she was a monkey, he was forced to take her, and they set out together. When Don Juan met his two brothers and their beautiful wives at the appointed place, he could not say a word.

Don Diego, noticing the gloomy appearance of his brother, said, "What is the matter with you? Where is your wife, Don Juan?"

Don Juan sadly replied, "Here she is."

"Where?" asked Don Pedro.

"Behind me," replied Don Juan.

When Don Pedro and Don Diego saw the monkey, they were very much surprised. "Oh!" exclaimed Don Pedro. "What happened to you? Did you lose your head?"

Don Juan could say nothing to this question. At last, however, he broke out, "Let us go home! Our father must be waiting for us."

So saying, Don Juan turned around and began the journey. Don Pedro and Don Diego, together with their wives, followed Don Juan. Chonguita walked by her husband's side.

When the return of the three brothers was announced to the king, the monarch hastened to meet them on the stairs. Upon learning that one of his sons had married a monkey, the king fainted; but after he had recovered his senses, he said to himself, "This misfortune is God's will. I must therefore bear it with patience." The king then assigned a house to each couple to live in.

But the more the king thought of it, the greater appeared to be the disgrace that his youngest son had brought on the family. So one day he called his three sons together, and said to them, "Tell your wives that I want each one of them to make me an embroidered coat. The one who fails to do this within three days will be put to death."

Now, the king issued this order in the hope that Chonguita would be put to death, because he thought that she would not be able to make the coat; but his hope was disappointed. On the third day his daughters-in-law presented to him the coats that they had made, and the one embroidered by Chonguita was the prettiest of all.

Still anxious to get rid of the monkey wife, the king next ordered his daughters-in-law to embroider a cap for him in two days, under penalty of death in case of failure. The caps were all done on time.

At last, thinking of no other way by which he could accomplish his end, the king summoned his three daughters-in-law, and said, "The husband of the one who shall be able to draw the prettiest picture on the walls of my chamber within three days shall succeed me on the throne."

At the end of the three days the pictures were finished. When the king went to inspect them, he found that Chonguita's was by far the prettiest, and so Don Juan was crowned king.

A great feast was held in the palace in honor of the new king. In the midst of the festivities Don Juan became very angry with his wife for insisting that he dance with her, and he hurled her against the wall. At this brutal action the hall suddenly became dark; but after a while it became bright again, and Chonguita had been transformed into a beautiful woman.

- Source: Dean S. Fansler, *Filipino Popular Tales* (Lancaster and New York: American Folk-Lore Society, 1921), no. 29, pp. 244-246.
- Copyright 1921 by the American Folk-Lore Society.
- Fansler's source: "Narrated by Pilar Ejercito, a Tagalog from Pagsanjan, Laguna. She heard the story from her aunt, who had heard it when she was still a little girl."
- Fansler entitles this story simply "Chonguita."
- For comparison, follow this link to a collection of tales about Monkey Bridegrooms.
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The Dog Bride

India

Once upon a time there was a youth who used to herd buffaloes; and as he watched his animals graze he noticed that exactly at noon every day a she-dog used to make its way to a ravine, in which there were some pools of water. This made him curious and he wondered to whom it belonged and what it did in the ravine. So he decided to watch, and one day when the dog came he hid himself and saw that when it got to the water, it shed its dog skin, and out stepped a beautiful maiden and began to bathe. And when she had finished bathing she put on the skin and became a dog again, and went off to the village. The herdboy followed her and watched into what house she entered, and he inquired to whom the house belonged. Having found out all about it, he went back to his work.

That year the herdboy's father and mother decided that it was time for him to marry and began to look about for a wife for him. But he announced that he had made up his mind to have a dog for his wife, and he would never marry a human girl.

Everyone laughed at him for such an extraordinary idea, but he could not be moved. So at last they concluded that he must really have the soul of a dog in him, and that it was best to let him have his own way. So his father and mother asked him whether there was any particular dog he would like to have for his bride, and then he gave the name of the man into whose house he had tracked the dog that he had seen going to the ravine. The master of the dog laughed at the idea that anyone should wish to marry her, and gladly accepted a bride's price for her. So a day was fixed for the wedding and the booth built for the ceremony, and the bridegroom's party went to the bride's house, and the marriage took place in due form, and the bride was escorted to her husband's house.

Every night when her husband was asleep, the bride used to come out of the dog's skin and go out of the house. And when her husband found out this, he one night only pretended to go to sleep and lay watching her. And when she was about to leave the room he jumped up and caught hold of her and seizing the dog skin, threw it into the fire, where it was burnt to ashes. So his bride remained a woman, but she was of more than human beauty. This soon became known in the village, and everyone congratulated the herdboy on his wisdom in marrying a dog.

Now the herdboy had a friend named Jitu, and when Jitu saw what a prize his friend had got, he thought that he could not do better than marry a dog himself. His relations made no objection, and a bride was selected, and the marriage took place, but when they were putting vermilion on the bride's forehead she began to growl; but in spite of her growling they dragged her to the bridegroom's house, and forcibly anointed her with oil and turmeric. But when the bride's party set off home, the dog broke loose and ran after them. Then everyone shouted to Jitu to run after his bride and bring her back, but she only growled and bit at him, so that he had at last to give it up.

Then everyone laughed at him so much that he was too ashamed to speak, and two or three days later he hanged himself.

- Source: Cecil Henry Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London: David Nutt, 1909), no. 85, pp. 254-256.
- From the preface: "The Santals are a Munda tribe, a branch of that aboriginal element which probably entered India from the northeast. At the present day they inhabit the eastern outskirts of the Chutia Nagpore plateau.... The Santal Parganas is a district 4800 square miles in area, lying about 150 miles north of Calcutta."
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The Cat Who Became a Queen

India

"Ah me! Ah me! What availeth my marriage with all these women? Never a son has the Deity vouchsafed me. Must I die, and my name be altogether forgotten in the land?" Thus soliloquized one of the greatest monarchs that ever reigned in Kashmir, and then went to his *zanána* [the apartment where his wives lived], and threatened his numerous wives with banishment if they did not bear him a son within the next year.

The women prayed most earnestly to the god Shiva to help them to fulfil the king's desire, and waited most anxiously for several months, hoping against hope, till at last they knew that it was all in vain, and that they must dissemble matters if they wished to remain in the royal household.

Accordingly, on an appointed time, word was sent to the king that one of his wives was *enciente*, and a little while afterwards the news was spread abroad that a little princess was born. But this, as we have said, was not so. Nothing of the kind had happened. The truth was, that a cat had given birth to a lot of kittens, one of which had been appropriated by the king's wives.

When his majesty heard the news he was exceedingly glad, and ordered the child to be brought to him -- a very natural request, which the king's wives had anticipated, and therefore were quite prepared with a reply. "Go and tell the king," said they to the messenger, "that the Brahmans have declared that the child must not be seen by her father until she is married." Thus the matter was hushed for a time.

Constantly did the king inquire after his daughter, and received wonderful accounts of her beauty and cleverness; so that his joy was great. Of course he would like to have had a son, but since the Deity had not condescended to fulfil his desire, he comforted himself with the thought of marrying his daughter to some person worthy of her, and capable of ruling the country after him. Accordingly, at the proper time he commissioned his counselors to find a suitable match for his daughter. A clever, good, and handsome prince was soon found, and arrangements for the marriage were quickly concluded.

What were the king's wives to do now? It was of no use for them to attempt to carry on their deceit any longer. The bridegroom would come and would wish to see his wife, and the king, too, would expect to see her.

"Better," said they, "that we send for this prince and reveal everything to him, and take our chance of the rest. Never mind the king. Some answer can be made to satisfy him for a while."

So they sent for the prince and told him everything, having previously made him swear that he would keep the secret, and not reveal it even to his father or mother. The marriage was celebrated in grand style, as became such great and wealthy kings, and the king was easily prevailed on to allow the palanquin containing the bride to leave the palace without looking at her. The cat only was in the palanquin, which reached the prince's country in safety. The prince took great care of the animal, which he kept locked up in his own private room, and would not allow anyone, not even his mother, to enter it.

One day, however, while the prince was away, his mother thought that she would go and speak to her daughter-in-law from outside the door. "O daughter-in-law," she cried, "I am very sorry that you are shut up in this room and not permitted to see anybody. It must be very dull for you. However, I am going out today; so you can leave the room without fear of seeing anyone. Will you come out?"

The cat understood everything, and wept much, just like a human being. Oh those bitter tears! They pierced the mother's heart, so that she determined to speak very strictly to her son on the matter as soon as he should return. They also reached the ears of Párvatí [the wife of Shiva], who at once went to her lord and entreated him to have mercy on the poor helpless cat.

"Tell her," said Shiva, "to rub some oil over her fur, and she will became a beautiful woman. She will find the oil in the room where she now is."

Párvatí lost no time in disclosing this glad news to the cat, who quickly rubbed the oil over its body, and was changed into the most lovely woman that ever lived. But she left a little spot on one of her shoulders which remained covered with cat's fur, lest her husband should suspect some trickery and deny her.

In the evening the prince returned and saw his beautiful wife, and was delighted. Then all anxiety as to what he should reply to his mother's earnest solicitations fled. She had only to see the happy, smiling, beautiful bride to know that her fears were altogether needless.

In a few weeks the prince, accompanied by his wife, visited his father-in-law, who, of course, believed the princess to be his own daughter, and was glad beyond measure. His wives too rejoiced, because their prayer had been heard and their lives saved. In due time the king settled his country on the prince, who eventually ruled over both countries, his father's and his father-in-law's, and thus became the most illustrious and wealthy monarch in the world.

- Source: J. Hinton Knowles, *Folk-Tales of Kashmir* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Company, 1893), pp. 8-10.
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The Mouse Maiden

Sri Lanka

There are a king and a queen of a certain city, and there is a daughter of the queen.

They asked permission to summon the daughter to go in marriage to the prince of another city. The king said, "Ha," so they came from that city to summon the king's princess. After coming, they told the bride to come out of her chamber in order to eat the rice of the wedding feast.

The queen said, "She is eating cooked rice in the house."

Then they told her to come out in order to dress her in the robes sent by the bridegroom. The queen said, "She is putting on robes in her chamber."

Then they told her to come out in order to go to the bridegroom's city. So the queen told two persons to come, and, having put a female mouseling in an incense box, brought it, and gave it into the hands of the two persons, and said, "Take this, and until seven days have gone by, do not open the mouth of the box."

Having taken it to the city, when they opened the mouth of the box after seven days, a mouse sprang out, and hid itself among the cooking pots.

There was also a servant girl at the prince's house. The girl apportioned and gave cooked rice and vegetable curry to the prince, and covered up the cooking pots containing the rest of the food. Then the mouseling came and, having taken and eaten some of the cooked rice and vegetables, covered up the cooking pots, and went again among the pots.

On the following day the same thing occurred. The prince said to the girl, "Does the mouseling eat the cooked rice? Look and come back."

The girl, having gone and looked, came back and said, "She has eaten the cooked rice, and covered the cooking pots, and has gone."

The prince said, "Go also, and eat rice, and come back." So the girl went and ate rice, and returned.

Next day the prince said, "I am going to cut paddy (growing rice). Remain at the house, and in the evening place the articles for cooking near the hearth." Then the prince went. Afterwards, in the evening, the girl placed the things for cooking near the hearth, and went out of the way.

The mouseling came, and cooked, and placed the food ready, and again went behind the pots. After evening had come, that girl apportioned and gave the rice to the prince. The prince ate, and told the girl, "Go also, and eat rice, and come back." So the girl went and ate rice, and, having covered the cooking pots, came to the place where the prince was.

Then the mouseling came and ate rice, and covered up the pots. After that, she said to the other mice, "Let us go and cut the paddy," and, collecting a great number of mice, cut all the paddy, and again returned to the house, and stayed among the pots. Next day when the prince went to the rice field to cut the paddy, all had been cut.

Afterwards the prince came back, and, saying "Let us go and collect and stack the paddy," collected the men, and stacked it, and threshed it by trampling it with buffaloes. Then they went and called the women, and, having got rid of the chaff in the wind, brought the paddy home.

After they had brought it, the prince went near the place where the cooking pots were stored, at which the mouseling was hidden, and said, "Having pounded this paddy to remove the husk, and cooked rice, let us go to your village to present it to your parents as the first-fruits."

The mouseling said, "I will not. You go."

So the prince told the girl to pound the paddy and cook rice, and having done this she gave it to the prince.

The prince took the package of cooked rice, and went to the mouseling's village, and gave it to the mouseling's mother.

The queen asked at the hand of the prince, "Where is the girl?"

The prince said, "She refused to come."

The queen said, "Go back to the city, and, having placed the articles for cooking near the hearth, get hid, and stay in the house."

After the prince returned to the city, he did as she had told him. The mouseling, having come out, took off her mouse jacket, and, assuming her shape as a girl, put on other clothes. While she was preparing to cook, the prince took the mouse jacket and burnt it.

Afterwards, when the girl went to the place where the mouse jacket had been, and looked for it, it was not there. Then she looked in the hearth, and saw that there was one sleeve in it. While she was there weeping and weeping, the prince came forward and said, "Your mother told me to burn the mouse jacket."

So the mouseling became the princess again, and the prince and princess remained there.

- Source: H. Parker, *Village Folk Tales of Ceylon* (London: Luzac and Company, 1910), no. 54, pp. 295-298.
- Parker's source: A tom-tom beater from the Northwestern province.
- Punctuation revised by D. L. Ashliman.
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The Frog's Skin

Georgia

There were once three brothers who wished to marry. They said, "Let us each shoot an arrow, and each shall take his wife from the place where the arrow falls." They shot their arrows; those of the two elder brothers fell on noblemen's houses, while the youngest brother's arrow fell in a lake. The two elder brothers led home their noble wives, and the youngest went to the shore of the lake. He saw a frog creep out of the lake and sit down upon a stone. He took it up and carried it back to the house. All the brothers came home with what fate had given them; the elder brothers with the noble maidens, and the youngest with a frog.

The brothers went out to work. The wives prepared the dinner and attended to all their household duties. The frog sat by the fire croaking, and its eyes glittered. Thus they lived together a long time in love and harmony.

At last the sisters-in-law wearied of the sight of the frog. When they swept the house, they threw out the frog with the dust. If the youngest brother found it, he took it up in his hand; if not, the frog would leap back to its place by the fire and begin to croak. The noble sisters did not like this, and said to their husbands, "Drive this frog out, and get a real wife for your brother." Every day the brothers bothered the youngest.

He replied, saying, "This frog is certainly my fate. I am worthy of no better. I must be faithful to it." His sisters-in-law persisted in telling their husbands that the brother and his frog must be sent away, and at last they agreed.

The young brother was now left quite desolate. There was no one to make his food, no one to stand watching at the door. For a short time a neighboring woman came to wait upon him, but she had not time, so he was left alone. The man became very melancholy.

Once when he was thinking sadly of his loneliness, he went to work. When he had finished his day's labor, he went home. He looked into his house and was struck with amazement. The sideboard was well replenished; in one place was spread a cloth, and on the cloth were many different kinds of tempting dishes. He looked and saw the frog in its place croaking. He said to himself that his sisters-in-law must have done this for him, and went to his work again. He was out all day working, and when he came home he always found everything prepared for him.

Once he said to himself, "I will see for once who is this unseen benefactor, who comes to do good to me and look after me." That day he stayed at home; he seated himself on the roof of the house and watched. In a short time the frog leaped out of the fireplace, jumped over to the doors, and all around the room. Seeing no one there, it went back and took off the frog's skin, put it near the fire, and came forth a beautiful maiden, fair as the sun; so lovely was she that the man could not imagine anything prettier. In the twinkling of an eye she had tidied everything, prepared the food, and cooked it. When everything was ready, she went to the fire, put on the skin again, and began to croak. When the man saw this he was very much astonished; he rejoiced exceedingly that God had granted him such happiness. He descended from the roof, went in, caressed his frog tenderly, and then sat down to his tasty supper.

The next day the man hid himself in the place where he had been the day before. The frog, having satisfied itself that nobody was there, stripped off its skin and began its good work. This time the man stole silently into the house, seized the frog's skin in his hand and threw it into the fire. When the maiden saw this she entreated him, she wept, and she said, "Do not burn it, or you shall surely be destroyed," but the man had burned it in a moment. "Now, if your happiness be turned to misery, it is not my fault," said the sorrow-stricken woman.

In a very short time the whole countryside knew that the man who had a frog now possessed in its place a lovely woman, who had come to him from heaven.

The lord of the country heard of this, and wished to take her from him. He called the beautiful woman's husband to him and said, "Sow a barnful of wheat in a day, or give me your wife." When he had spoken thus, the man was obliged to consent, and he went home melancholy.

When he went in he told his wife what had taken place. She reproached him, saying, "I told you what would happen if you did burn the skin, and you did not heed me; but I will not blame you. Be not sad; go in the morning to the edge of the lake from which I came, and call out, 'Mother and Father! I pray you, lend me your swift bullocks.' Lead them away with you, and the bullocks will in one day plow the fields and sow the grain." The husband did this.

He went to the edge of the lake and called out, "Mother and Father! I entreat you, lend me your swift bullocks today." There came forth from the lake such a team of oxen as was never seen on sea or land.

The youth drove the bullocks away, came to his lord's field, and plowed and sowed them in one day.

His lord was very much surprised. He did not know if there was anything impossible to this man, whose wife he wanted. He called him a second time, and said, "Go and gather up the wheat you have sown, that not a grain may be wanting, and that the barn may be full. If you do not do this, your wife is mine."

"This is impossible," said the man to himself. He went home to his wife, who again reproached him, and then said, "Go to the lake's edge and ask for the jackdaws."

The husband went to the edge of the lake and called out, "Mother and Father! I beg you to lend me your jackdaws today." From the lake came forth flocks of jackdaws; they flew to the plowed ground, each gathered up a seed and put it into the barn.

The lord came and cried out, "There is one seed short; I know each one, and one is missing." At that moment a jackdaw's caw was heard; it came with the missing seed, but owing to a lame foot it was a little late.

The lord was very angry that even the impossible was possible to this man, and could not think what to give him to do.

He puzzled his brain until he thought of the following plan. He called the man and said to him, "My mother, who died in this village, took with her a ring. If you go to the other world and bring that ring back to me, it is well; if not, I shall take away your wife."

The man said to himself, "This is quite impossible." He went home and complained to his wife. She reproached him, and then said, "Go to the lake and ask for the ram."

The husband went to the lake and called out, "Mother and Father! Give me your ram today, I pray you." From the lake there came forth a ram with twisted horns; from its mouth issued a flame of fire. It said to the man, "Mount on my back!"

The man sat down, and, quick as lightning, the ram descended towards the lower regions. It went on and shot like an arrow through the earth.

They traveled on, and saw in one place a man and woman sitting on a bullock's skin, which was not big enough for them, and they were like to fall off. The man called out to them, "What can be the meaning of this, that this bullock skin is not big enough for two people?"

They said, "We have seen many pass by like you, but none has returned. When you come back we shall answer your question."

They went on their way and saw a man and woman sitting on an ax handle, and they were not afraid of falling. The man called out to them, "Are you not afraid of falling from the handle of an ax?"

They said to him, "We have seen many pass by like you, but none has returned. When you come back we shall answer your question."

They went on their way again, until they came to a place where they saw a priest feeding cattle. This priest had such a long beard that it spread over the ground, and the cattle, instead of eating grass, fed on the priest's beard, and he could not prevent it. The man called out, "Priest, what is the meaning of this? Why is your beard pasture for these cattle?"

The priest replied, "I have seen many pass by like you, but none has returned. When you come back I shall answer your question."

They journeyed on again until they came to a place where they saw nothing but boiling pitch, and a flame came forth from it -- and this was hell. The ram said, "Sit firmly on my back, for we must pass through this fire." The man held fast. The ram gave a leap, and they escaped through the fire unhurt.

There they saw a melancholy woman seated on a golden throne. She said; "What is it, my child? What troubles you? What has brought you here?" He told her everything that had happened to him. She said, "I must punish this very wicked child of mine, and you must take him a casket from me." She gave him a casket, and said, "Whatever you do, do not open this casket yourself. Take it with you, give it to your lord, and run quickly away from him."

The man took the casket and went away. He came to the place where the priest was feeding the cattle. The priest said, "I promised you an answer. Hearken unto my words: In life I loved nothing but myself; I cared for nothing else. My flocks I fed on other pastures than my own, and the neighboring cattle died of starvation. Now I am paying the penalty."

Then he went on to the place where the man and woman were sitting on the handle of the ax. They said, "We promised you an answer. Hearken unto our words: We loved each other too well on earth, and it is the same with us here."

Then he came to the two seated on the bullock skin, which was not big enough for them. They said, "We promised you an answer. Hearken unto our words: We despised each other in life, and we equally despise each other here."

At last the man came up on earth, descended from the ram, and went to his lord. He gave him the casket and quickly ran away. The lord opened the casket, and there came forth fire, which swallowed him up. Our brother was thus victorious over his enemy, and no one took his wife from him. They lived lovingly together, and blessed God as their deliverer.

- Source: Marjory Wardrop, *Georgian Folk Tales* (London, 1894), pp. 15-21.
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The Tsarevna Frog

Russia

In old, old Russian tsarstvo, I do not know when, there lived a sovereign prince with the princess his wife. They had three sons, all of them young, and such brave fellows that no pen could describe them. The youngest had the name of Ivan Tsarevitch.

One day their father said to his sons: "My dear boys, take each of you an arrow, draw your strong bow and let your arrow fly; in whatever court it falls, in that court there will be a wife for you."

The arrow of the oldest Tsarevitch fell on a boyar-house just in front of the terem where women live; the arrow of the second Tsarevitch flew to the red porch of a rich merchant, and on the porch there stood a sweet girl, the merchant's daughter. The youngest, the brave Tsarevitch Ivan, had the ill luck to send his arrow into the midst of a swamp, where it was caught by a croaking frog.

Ivan Tsarevitch came to his father: "How can I marry the frog?" complained the son. "Is she my equal? Certainly she is not."

"Never mind, "replied his father. "You have to marry the frog, for such is evidently your destiny."

Thus the brothers were married: the oldest to a young boyarishnia, a nobleman's child; the second to the merchant's beautiful daughter, and the youngest, Tsarevitch Ivan, to a croaking frog.

After a while the sovereign prince called his three sons and said to them: "Have each of your wives bake a loaf of bread by tomorrow morning."

Ivan returned home. There was no smile on his face, and his brow was clouded.

"C-r-o-a-k! C-r-o-a-k! Dear husband of mine, Tsarevitch Ivan, why so sad?" gently asked the frog. "Was there anything disagreeable in the palace?"

"Disagreeable indeed," answered Ivan Tsarevitch; "the Tsar, my father, wants you to bake a loaf of white bread by tomorrow."

"Do not worry, Tsarevitch. Go to bed; the morning hour is a better adviser than the dark evening."

The Tsarevitch, taking his wife's advice, went to sleep. Then the frog threw off her frog skin and turned into a beautiful, sweet girl, Vassilissa by name. She now stepped out on the porch and called aloud: "Nurses and waitresses, come to me at once and prepare a loaf of white bread for tomorrow morning, a loaf exactly like those I used to eat in my royal father's palace."

In the morning Tsarevitch Ivan awoke with the crowing cocks, and you know the cocks and chickens are never late.

Yet the loaf was already made, and so fine it was that nobody could even describe it, for only in fairyland one finds such marvelous loaves. It was adorned all about with pretty figures, with towns and fortresses on each side, and within it was white as snow and light as a feather.

The Tsar father was pleased and the Tsarevitch received his special thanks.

"Now there is another task," said the Tsar smilingly. "Have each of your wives weave a rug by tomorrow."

Tsarevitch Ivan came back to his home. There was no smile on his face and his brow was clouded.

"C-r-o-a-k! C-r-o-a-k! Dear Tsarevitch Ivan, my husband and master, why so troubled again? Was not father pleased?"

"How can I be otherwise? The Tsar, my father, has ordered a rug by tomorrow."

"Do not worry, Tsarevitch. Go to bed; go to sleep. The morning hour will bring help."

Again the frog turned into Vassilissa, the wise maiden, and again she called aloud: "Dear nurses and faithful waitresses, come to me for new work. Weave a silk rug like the one I used to sit upon in the palace of the king, my father."

Once said, quickly done. When the cocks began their early "cock-a-doodle-doo," Tsarevitch Ivan awoke, and lo! there lay the most beautiful silk rug before him, a rug that no one could begin to describe. Threads of silver and gold were interwoven among bright-colored silken ones, and the rug was too beautiful for anything but to admire.

The Tsar father was pleased, thanked his son Ivan, and issued a new order. He now wished to see the three wives of his handsome sons, and they were to present their brides on the next day.

The Tsarevitch Ivan returned home. Cloudy was his brow, more cloudy than before.

"C-r-o-a-k! C-r-o-a-k! Tsarevitch, my dear husband and master, why so sad ? Hast thou heard anything unpleasant at the palace?"

"Unpleasant enough, indeed! My father, the Tsar, ordered all of us to present our wives to him. Now tell me, how could I dare go with thee?"

"It is not so bad after all, and could be much worse," answered the frog, gently croaking. "Thou shalt go alone and I will follow thee. When thou hearest a noise, a great noise, do not be afraid; simply say: 'There is my miserable froggy coming in her miserable box.'"

The two elder brothers arrived first with their wives, beautiful, bright, and cheerful, and dressed in rich garments. Both the happy bridegrooms made fun of the Tsarevitch Ivan.

"Why alone, brother?" they laughingly said to him. "Why didst thou not bring thy wife along with thee? Was there no rag to cover her? Where couldst thou have gotten such a beauty? We are ready to wager that in all the swamps in the dominion of our father it would be hard to find another one like her." And they laughed and laughed.

Lo! what a noise! The palace trembled, the guests were all frightened. Tsarevitch Ivan alone remained quiet and said: "No danger; it is my froggy coming in her box."

To the red porch came flying a golden carriage drawn by six splendid white horses, and Vassilissa, beautiful beyond all description, gently reached her hand to her husband. He led her with him to the heavy oak tables, which were covered with snow-white linen and loaded with many wonderful dishes such as are known and eaten only in the land of fairies and never anywhere else. The guests were eating and chatting gaily.

Vassilissa drank some wine, and what was left in the tumbler she poured into her left sleeve. She ate some of the fried swan, and the bones she threw into her right sleeve. The wives of the two elder brothers watched her and did exactly the same.

When the long, hearty dinner was over, the guests began dancing and singing. The beautiful Vassilissa came forward, as bright as a star, bowed to her sovereign, bowed to the honorable guests and danced with her husband, the happy Tsarevitch Ivan.

While dancing, Vassilissa waved her left sleeve and a pretty lake appeared in the midst of the hall and cooled the air. She waved her right sleeve and white swans swam on the water. The Tsar, the guests, the servants, even the gray cat sitting in the corner, all were amazed and wondered at the beautiful Vassilissa. Her two sisters-in-law alone envied her. When their turn came to dance, they also waved their left sleeves as Vassilissa had done, and, oh, wonder! they sprinkled wine all around. They waved their right sleeves, and instead of swans the bones flew in the face of the Tsar father. The Tsar grew very angry and bade them leave the palace. In the meantime Ivan Tsarevitch watched a moment to slip away unseen. He ran home, found the frog skin, and burned it in the fire.

Vassilissa, when she came back, searched for the skin, and when she could not find it her beautiful face grew sad and her bright eyes filled with tears.

She said to Tsarevitch Ivan, her husband: "Oh, dear Tsarevitch, what hast thou done? There was but a short time left for me to wear the ugly frog skin. The moment was near when we could have been happy together forever. Now I must bid thee goodbye. Look for me in a faraway country to which no one knows the roads, at the palace of Kostshei the Deathless;" and Vassilissa turned into a white swan and flew away through the window.

Tsarevitch Ivan wept bitterly. Then he prayed to the almighty God, and making the sign of the cross northward, southward, eastward, and westward, he went on a mysterious journey.

No one knows how long his journey was, but one day he met an old, old man. He bowed to the old man, who said: "Good-day, brave fellow. What art thou searching for, and whither art thou going?"

Tsarevitch Ivan answered sincerely, telling all about his misfortune without hiding anything.

"And why didst thou burn the frog skin? It was wrong to do so. Listen now to me. Vassilissa was born wiser than her own father, and as he envied his daughter's wisdom he condemned her to be a frog for three long years. But I pity thee and want to help thee. Here is a magic ball. In whatever direction this ball rolls, follow without fear."

Ivan Tsarevitch thanked the good old man, and followed his new guide, the ball. Long, very long, was his road. One day in a wide, flowery field he met a bear, a big Russian bear. Ivan Tsarevitch took his bow and was ready to shoot the bear.

"Do not kill me, kind Tsarevitch," said the bear. "Who knows but that I maybe useful to thee?" And Ivan did not shoot the bear.

Above in the sunny air there flew a duck, a lovely white duck. Again the Tsarevitch drew his bow to shoot it. But the duck said to him: "Do not kill me, good Tsarevitch. I certainly shall be useful to thee some day."

And this time he obeyed the command of the duck and passed by. Continuing his way he saw a blinking hare. The Tsarevitch prepared an arrow to shoot it, but the gray, blinking hare said: "Do not kill me, brave Tsarevitch. I shall prove myself grateful to thee in a very short time."

The Tsarevitch did not shoot the hare, but passed by. He walked farther and farther after the rolling ball, and came to the deep blue sea. On the sand there lay a fish. I do not remember the name of the fish, but it was a big fish, almost dying on the dry sand.

" O Tsarevitch Ivan!" prayed the fish, "have mercy upon me and push me back into the cool sea."

The Tsarevitch did so, and walked along the shore. The ball, rolling all the time, brought Ivan to a hut, a queer, tiny hut standing on tiny hen's feet.

"Izboushka! Izboushka!" -- for so in Russia do they name small huts -- "Izboushka, I want thee to turn thy front to me," cried Ivan, and lo! the tiny hut turned its front at once. Ivan stepped in and saw a witch, one of the ugliest witches he could imagine.

"Ho! Ivan Tsarevitch! What brings thee here?" was his greeting from the witch.

"O, thou old mischief!" shouted Ivan with anger. "Is it the way in holy Russia to ask questions before the tired guest gets something to eat, something to drink, and some hot water to wash the dust off?"

Baba Yaga, the witch, gave the Tsarevitch plenty to eat and drink, besides hot water to wash the dust off. Tsarevitch Ivan felt refreshed. Soon he became talkative, and related the wonderful story of his marriage. He told how he had lost his dear wife, and that his only desire was to find her.

"I know all about it," answered the witch. "She is now at the palace of Kostshei the Deathless, and thou must understand that Kostshei is terrible. He watches her day and night and no one can ever conquer him. His death depends on a magic needle. That needle is within a hare; that hare is within a large trunk; that trunk is hidden in the branches of an old oak tree; and that oak tree is watched by Kostshei as closely as Vassilissa herself, which means closer than any treasure he has."

Then the witch told Ivan Tsarevitch how and where to find the oak tree. Ivan hastily went to the place. But when he perceived the oak tree he was much discouraged, not knowing what to do or how to begin the work. Lo and behold! that old acquaintance of his, the Russian bear, came running along, approached the tree, uprooted it, and the trunk fell and broke. A hare jumped out of the trunk and began to run fast; but another hare, Ivan's friend, came running after, caught it and tore it to pieces. Out of the hare there flew a duck, a gray one which flew very high and was almost invisible, but the beautiful white duck followed the bird and struck its gray enemy, which lost an egg. That egg fell into the deep sea. Ivan meanwhile was anxiously watching his faithful friends helping him. But when the egg disappeared in the blue waters he could not help weeping. All of a sudden a big fish came swimming up, the same fish he had saved, and brought the egg in his mouth. How happy Ivan was when he took it! He broke it and found the needle inside, the magic needle upon which everything depended.

At the same moment Kostshei lost his strength and power forever. Ivan Tsarevitch entered his vast dominions, killed him with the magic needle, and in one of the palaces found his own dear wife, his beautiful Vassilissa. He took her home and they were very happy ever after.

- Source: Verra Xenophontovna Kalamatiano de Blumenthal, *Folk Tales from the Russian* (Chicago, New York, and London: Rand, McNally and Compnay, 1903), pp. 13-26.
- Type 402, "The Animal Bride"; followed by type 302, "The Giant Whose Heart Was in an Egg."
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The Frog

Austria/Italy

A man and a woman had no children, although they would have given their lives to have some. They prayed for offspring, under any conditions. It appeared that heaven had mercy on them, but when the time came, the newborn was a female frog.

Not letting themselves be distracted, the man and the woman raised her. They taught her music and all kinds of skills.

Above all else the frog loved to sing, and she trained her voice and her range until one would think she was the best singer from the city. Other people had not seen the frog and thought indeed that she was an unknown singer and could not explain why she did not perform in public.

One day the king's son passed by the house and heard the frog singing. He stopped and listened for a long time. He immediately fell in love with the unknown singer and approached her father with a request for permission to see her and speak with her, but the father refused.

The prince heard her sing again and fell even more deeply in love with her. He demanded that her father give her to him in marriage. The father replied that he would have to ask his daughter. The frog agreed under the conditions that she be taken to the royal castle in an enclosed carriage and that she be allowed to enter the bridal chamber without being seen. The prince, his curiosity even more aroused, accepted the conditions.

On the appointed day the frog rode to the royal castle in a tightly enclosed carriage and made her way to the splendid bridal chamber without being seen. She hid herself in one of the two beds that were there. The prince came that evening and was astonished when he could not find his bride. Disappointed, he went to bed.

At midnight the frog crept out of the cushions and onto the prince's breast. Half asleep, he took the frog into his hand and threw her to the floor. She hopped angrily down the steps and home.

The next morning the prince was sorry that he had thrown the frog to the floor, and he became sad and melancholy.

Some time later he went back to the house. Hearing singing, he fell madly in love and began courting his bride anew. The frog accepted, this time without setting any conditions. She made a little carriage out of cardboard, hitched a rooster to it, and drove it herself to the royal castle.

Three fairies were standing in the road. One of them had swallowed a fishbone, which stuck in her throat and was causing her great pain. When the three of them saw the frog driving by in her little carriage and cracking her whip so merrily, they all laughed out with joy. The fishbone dislodged itself from the one fairy's throat, freeing her suddenly of her pain.

They approached the frog, and the first one said, "I will give you a beautiful carriage with horses and servants!" And in an instant a carriage was there with horses and servants in beautiful livery.

Then the second one said, "I will give you expensive clothes and gold and silver!" And in an instant it was all there, gleaming and shimmering, and it was such a joy.

Then came the third fairy, the one who had been freed of the fishbone by laughing, and she said, "I will transform you!"

In that instant the frog became a beautiful maiden. She graciously thanked the three kind fairies and drove happily to the royal castle and to her jubilant and joyful wedding.

- Source: Christian Schneller, *Märchen und Sagen aus Wälschtirol: Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Sagenkunde* (Innsbruck: Verlag der Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1867), no. 29, pp. 82-84.
- Translated by D. L. Ashliman. Copyright 1999.
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The Frog's Bridegroom

Germany

Once upon a time there was a father who had three sons. He sent two of them out to find brides for themselves, but the third one, stupid Hansl, was to stay home and feed the animals. He was not satisfied with this, so the father finally said, "Just go. You can look for a bride too."

So Hansl left, and he came to a great forest. On the other side of the forest there was a pond. A frog was sitting on the pond's bank, and it asked, "Now there, Hansl, where are you going?"

"Oh, I'm looking for a bride!"

"Marry me!" said the frog, and this was all right with Hansl, because he did not know where he might find a bride. The frog jumped into the pond, and Hansl went back home.

His brothers were already there, and they wanted to know if the fool had found a bride. "Yes," said Hansl, "I have one already!"

The next day the father gave each one a bundle of flax, saying, "I will give the house to the one of you whose bride can spin the most beautiful yarn in three days." Then each one left, including Hansl.

The frog was again sitting on the bank of the pond. "Now there, bridegroom, where are you going?"

"To you. Can you spin?"

"Yes," said the frog. Just tie the flax onto my back."

Hansl did this, and the frog jumped into the pond. One strand of flax was sticking out below and the other one above. "Too bad about the flax. It's gone," thought Hans, and he sadly went back home.

But nonetheless, on the third day he returned to the pond. The frog was again sitting on the bank, and it asked, "Now there, bridegroom, where are you going?"

"Have you spun?"

"Yes," said the frog, hopped into the pond, and returned with a skein of yarn that was more beautifully spun than any other. Hans was happy, and he joyfully ran back home, and he did indeed have the most beautiful yarn.

The brothers complained, and then the father said, "I will give the house to the one of you who brings home the most beautiful bride."

The brothers left once again, but this time Hansl took a water jug with him. The other two wanted to know, "Why are you taking a water jug with you?"

"To put my bride in."

The two laughed, "He must have some beautiful bride!"

The frog was already sitting next to the pond. "Now there, bridegroom, where are you going?"

"Today I am coming for you!"

Then the frog jumped into the pond and came back with three keys. "Go up there," it said. "There is a castle up there. One of these three keys unlocks the living room, one unlocks the stall, and one unlocks the carriage house. In the living room there are three robes: a red one, a green one, and a white one. In the stall there are two white horses, two black ones, and two brown ones. In the carriage house are three coaches: one of gold, one of silver, and one of glass. In each place you can take what you want."

Once in the castle Hansl first tried on the red robe, but he did not like it: "It makes me look like a butcher." He did not like the green one either: "It makes me look like a hunter." The white one suited him well. Then he went to the stall and took the brown horses. In the carriage house he first wanted to take the golden coach, but it was too lordly for him. The silver one was too heavy, so he took the glass one. He hitched up the brown horses and drove to the pond.

A beautiful young woman was standing there. She said, "You have redeemed me. If you had taken the best thing in each place then I would have had to remain a frog. And the great forest is a fruit orchard, and the pond is a rose garden. All this belongs to you. Let your brothers have the house. You can marry anyone you want to."

"No, you must come with me, so that my father and my brothers can see you." So she rode off with him.

The father and the brothers were amazed when they saw Hansl with the beautiful young woman in the coach. But she suddenly disappeared and flew into the air as a white dove. Hansl gave the house to his brothers. He married a woman from his estate and was very happy. And if he hasn't died, then he still must be alive.

- Source: Gustav Jungbauer, *Böhmerwald-Märchen* (Passau, 1923), no. 1.
- Translated by by D. L. Ashliman. Copyright 1999.
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Doll i' the Grass

Norway

Once on a time there was a king who had twelve sons. When they were grown big he told them they must go out into the world and win themselves wives, but these wives must each be able to spin, and weave, and sew a shirt in one day, else he wouldn't have them for daughters-in-law.

To each he gave a horse and a new suit of mail, and they went out into the world to look after their brides; but when they had gone a bit of the way, they said they wouldn't have Boots, their youngest brother, with them. He wasn't fit for anything.

Well, Boots had to stay behind, and he didn't know what to do or whither to turn; and so he grew so downcast, he got off his horse, and sat down in the tall grass to weep. But when he had sat a little while, one of the tufts in the grass began to stir and move, and out of it came a little white thing, and when it came nearer, Boots saw it was a charming little lassie, only such a tiny bit of a thing. So the lassie went up to him, and asked if he would come down below and see "Doll i' the Grass."

Yes, he'd be very happy; and so he went.

Now, when he got down, there sat Doll i' the Grass on a chair. She was so lovely and so smart, and she asked Boots wither he was going, and what was his business.

So he told her how there were twelve brothers of them, and how the king had given them horse and mail, and said they must each go out into the world and find them a wife who could spin, and weave, and sew a shirt in a day. "But if you'll only say at once you'll be my wife, I'll not go a step farther," said Boots to Doll i' the Grass.

Well, she was willing enough, and so she made haste and span, and wove, and sewed the shirt, but it was so tiny, tiny little. It wasn't longer than so ---- long.

So Boots set off home with it, but when he brought it out he was almost ashamed, it was so small. Still the king said he should have her, and so Boots set off, glad and happy to fetch his little sweetheart. So when he got to Doll i' the Grass, he wished to take her up before him on his horse; but she wouldn't have that, for she said she would sit and drive along in a silver spoon, and that she had two small white horses to draw her. So off they set, he on his horse and she on her silver spoon, and the two horses that drew her were two tiny white mice. But Boots always kept the other side of the road, he was so afraid lest he should ride over her, she was so little.

So when they had gone a bit of the way, they came to a great piece of water. Here Boots' horse got frightened, and shied across the road and upset the spoon, and Doll i' the Grass tumbled into the water. Then Boots got so sorrowful, because he didn't know how to get her out again. But in a little while up came a merman with her, and now she was as well and full grown as other men and women, and far lovelier than she had been before. So he took her up before him on his horse, and rode home.

When Boots got home all his brothers had come back, each with his sweetheart, but these were all so ugly, and foul, and wicked, that they had done nothing but fight with one another on the way home, and on their heads they had a kind of hat that was daubed over with tar and soot, and so the rain had run down off the hats onto their faces, till they got far uglier and nastier than they had been before.

When his brothers saw Boots and his sweetheart, they were all as jealous as jealous could be of her; but the king was so overjoyed with them both, that he drove all the others away, and so boots held his wedding feat with Doll i' the Grass, and after that they lived well and happily together a long, long time, and if they're not dead, why they're alive still.

- Source: Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe, *Popular Tales from the Norse*, translated by George Webbe Dasent (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1888), pp. 374-376.
- This tale differs from others in this group in that the "creature" discovered by the hero in his search for a bride is not a creepy, crawly thing, but rather a beautiful -- but diminutive -- human (or possibly elfin) female. However, in all other aspects this story follows the outline of a traditional type 402 folktale.
- Link to the above tale in Norwegian: Dukken i gresset av Peter Christen Asbjørnsen og Jørgen Moe.
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The She-Wolf

Croatia

There was an enchanted mill, so that no one could stay there, because a she-wolf always haunted it. A soldier went once into the mill to sleep. He made a fire in the parlor, went up into the garret above, bored a hole with an auger in the floor, and peeped down into the parlor.

A she-wolf came in and looked about the mill to see whether she could find anything to eat. She found nothing, and then went to the fire, and said, "Skin down! Skin down! Skin down!" She raised herself upon her hind-legs, and her skin fell down. She took the skin, and hung it on a peg, and out of the wolf came a damsel. The damsel went to the fire, and fell asleep there.

He came down from the garret, took the skin, nailed it fast to the mill-wheel, then came into the mill, shouted over her, and said, "Good morning, damsel! How do you do?

She began to scream, "Skin on me! Skin on me! Skin on me!" But the skin could not come down, for it was fast nailed.

The pair married and had two children.

As soon as the elder son got to know that his mother was a wolf, he said to her, "Mamma! Mamma! I have heard that you are a wolf."

His mother replied, "What nonsense are you talking! How can you say that I am a wolf?"

The father of the two children went one day into the field to plow, and his son said, "Papa, let me, too, go with you."

His father said, "Come."

When they had come to the field, the son asked his father, "Papa, is it true that our mother is a wolf?"

The father said, "It is."

The son inquired, "And where is her skin?"

His father said, "There it is, on the mill-wheel."

No sooner had the son got home, than he said at once to his mother, "Mamma! Mamma! You are a wolf! I know where your skin is."

His mother asked him, "Where is my skin?"

He said, "There, on the mill-wheel."

His mother said to him, "Thank you, sonny, for rescuing me." Then she went away, and was never heard of more.

- Source: A. H. Wratislaw, *Sixty Folk-Tales from Exclusively Slavonic Sources* (London: Elliot Stock, 1889), pp. 290-291.
- The motif of the stolen skin is also found in many tales from the Swan Maiden and the Mermaid Wife groups.
- "The She-Wolf" is, of course, a variant of the many werewolf legends that exist throughout Europe. Link to additional werewolf legends.
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Links to additional tales about animal brides

1. The Three Feathers (Germany, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Children's and Household Tales,* no. 63).
2. The German text of the above tale: Die drei Federn von den Brüdern Grimm. This is a text from the Projekt Gutenberg-DE.
3. The Poor Miller's Boy and the Cat (Germany, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Children's and Household Tales,* no. 106).
4. The German text of the above tale: Der arme Müllerbursch und das Kätzchen von den Brüdern Grimm. This is a text from the Projekt Gutenberg-DE.
5. The Frog (Italy). This link will take you to Andrew Lang's *The Violet Fairy Book* (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1901) at the University of Virginia's electronic text center.
6. Oisin in Tir na n-Og. Oisin (also spelled Ossian), the legendary Celtic hero and poet, marries a princess who through a Druidic spell has been cursed with the head of a pig.

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- D. L. Ashliman's **folktexts**, a library of folktales, folklore, fairy tales, and mythology.
- Animal Brides and Animal Bridegrooms: an index page of folktales about marriage with a beast.

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